KING IN BLACK

VENOM

CATES
COELLO
ABURTOV

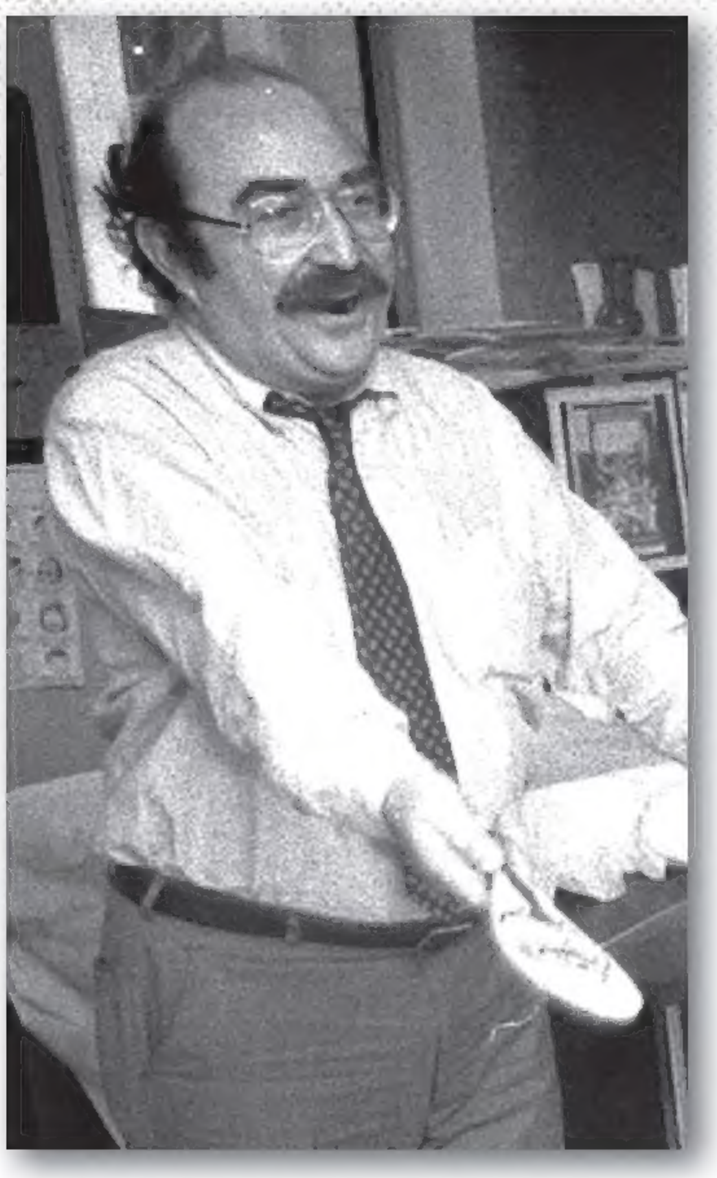
MARVEL

32

LGY#197

COELLO - ABURTOV

IN MEMORIAM



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELIOT R. BROWN

MIKE HOBSON
1936–2020

Last month, longtime Marvel Comics Publisher Mike Hobson passed away. In remembrance of his life and work, Mike's friend and colleague Tom DeFalco, former Marvel Editor in Chief, shared his memories of the Marvel luminary.

Many are the unsung heroes of the comic book industry. These people are the hidden giants who work behind the scenes — without credit, fanfare or fame — but are essential to the creation of your comics. They are people like Mike Hobson.

As a supervisor at Marvel, Mike was the greatest. He encouraged initiative, listened with an open mind and always supported his people. He rarely raised his voice and had a near-magical way of defusing tense situations. (Mixing creative people with those from marketing, sales or accounting is usually a recipe for disaster.)

Mike defined the word "gentleman." He was refined and soft-spoken, had an infectious laugh and was an intriguing conversationalist, well-versed in a variety of subjects. He knew the best restaurants, the tastiest dishes, the most flavorsome wines and the finest hotels. An invitation to dine with Mike was always a treasured event. He was the adult we all wanted to be when we grew up.

Whenever I think of Mike, two occasions spring to mind. One is the very first time Marvel sent me on a business trip by myself. Mike asked to see me before I left. I went to his office with pen and pad, expecting some last-minute business instructions. Instead, he told me to make sure I made lunch and dinner reservations and gave me a list of restaurants.

I also recall sitting in my office one afternoon when a furious Mike burst in.

"Do you know what those two idiots are doing?" He asked.

"Which two idiots?" I responded.

Mike glared at me for a moment and then suddenly exploded in unrestrained laughter. He actually fell into my couch, and it took him several minutes to regain control. It seems two of my editors had stuck a fishing pole out our seventh-floor window with an old Milky Way for bait and were trolling for passersby. While Mike could appreciate the humor in the situation, he felt our editors needed to adhere to a higher standard of professionalism. That was Mike.

Mike Hobson was my boss and my friend. He will be missed.

Tom DeFalco
November 2020

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

KING IN BLACK

DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE, DISGRACED REPORTER EDDIE BROCK STUMBLED UPON AN ALIEN ORGANISM CALLED A SYMBIOTE.

SENSING A KINSHIP WITH BROCK AND A SHARED HATRED OF THE COSTUMED VIGILANTE CALLED SPIDER-MAN, THE CREATURE BONDED TO HIM.

SEVERED FROM ITS OWN COLLECTED CONSCIOUSNESS, THE SYMBIOTE FOUND A WILLING PARTNER IN BROCK, AND THE TWO BECAME A VIGILANTE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

ELIMINATING THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE, THEY ARE...

VENOM

THE OTHER SIDE

KNULL, THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, HAS LANDED ON EARTH. BY COVERING THE PLANET IN A SYMBIOTE DOME, KNULL HAS TRAPPED ALL OF HUMANITY WITHIN, FORCING THEM TO FACE HIS ARMY OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS HELL-BENT ON THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL LIGHT AND LIFE. EDDIE BROCK, AS VENOM, ATTEMPTED TO FACE KNULL ON TOP OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING—WHERE KNULL STRIPPED EDDIE OF HIS SYMBIOTE AND DROPPED HIM, HELPLESS, TO THE STREETS BELOW.

DONNY CATES WRITER // IBAN COELLO ARTIST
JESUS ABURTOV COLORIST
VC'S CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

IBAN COELLO & JESUS ABURTOV COVER ARTISTS

RYAN STEGMAN & FRANK MARTIN;
RYAN STEGMAN [SKETCH];
RYAN BROWN [MARVEL VS. ALIEN]
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

PATRICK McGRATH KING IN BLACK LOGO DESIGN
JAY BOWEN KING IN BLACK TRADE DRESS DESIGN
ANTHONY GAMBINO PRODUCTION DESIGN
DANNY KHAZEM ASSISTANT EDITOR
DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR
NICK LOWE EXECUTIVE EDITOR
C.B. CEBULSKI EDITOR IN CHIEF

© 2021 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

SMASH

I HAVE FALLEN MANY TIMES IN MY LIFE.

FALLEN SO HARD I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER GET UP.

THAT I HAD SEEN THE BOTTOM...AND SCRATCHED AND CLAWED MY WAY UP FROM IT AND INTO THE LIGHT AGAIN...

BUT NOW...

...NOW I'M FALLING AND THERE *IS* NO BOTTOM...

I LOOK UP...

...AND THERE IS ONLY... DARKNESS.

I CAN...SEE MYSELF...

...MY BODY. MY PHYSICAL FORM...

...STILL HANGING ON TO THE WORLD ABOVE ME...

I SCREAM AT HIM.

AT MYSELF.

I SCREAM UNTIL I FEEL BLOOD IN MY THROAT...

...BUT THERE IS NO ONE TO HEAR IT.

I HAVE BEEN IN THIS PLACE BEFORE.

SWAM IN IT. BEEN *TRAPPED* IN IT.

BUT NEVER...LIKE THIS.

EVEN WHEN ***KNULL*** CONTROLLED MY OTHER AND CAST ME OUT.

OR WHEN ***CARNAGE*** DID THE SAME TO ME ON THE ISLAND OF BONES...

...I COULD ALWAYS FEEL A CONNECTION.

ALWAYS SENSED SOMETHING.

SOMETHING... ***TETHERING*** ME TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ABYSS THAT IS THE HIVE MIND.

VENOM, MY OTHER...

DYLAN.

THEY WERE ALWAYS THERE...

AND WE WERE ALWAYS...

...***STRONGER***...

...WHEN WE WEREN'T AL--

BROCK!

WAKE UP, SOLDIER!

WH-WHAT? I CAN HEAR YOU! WHO ARE YOU?!

KNULL'S LITTLE MINIONS IN HERE ALMOST HAVE YOU. THEY'RE TAKING YOU DOWN INTO HELL, SON.

NOW....I CAN GET YOU OUT...GET YOU FREE OF THEM...

BUT IT'S GONNA HURT LIKE @#$%!

WHAT? WHAT IS--

FWAASSH

AGHH!

STOP.

THIS IS DO OR DIE TIME, SON.

ALL RIGHT. NOW *CONCENTRATE*, DAMMIT.

WHAT? WHAT DO I DO?

FALLING.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW--

YOU'RE IN THE *HIVE* NOW, SON. YOU'RE *PART* OF IT.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUST LET THEM SWALLOW YOU LIKE THAT...

BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST?

HOW DO YOU *STOP FALLING?*

SAME WAY *EVERYONE* STOPS FALLING.

YOU BRACE YOUR ASS FOR IMPACT...

...AND YOU *LAND.*

AGGHH--

BROCK...

WHAT... HOW DID I JUST--

...I'D LOVE TO TELL YOU THE WORST OF IT IS OVER...

...BUT THIS NEXT PART IS THE HARDEST.

OH MY GOD...

NOW YOU ***STAND THE HELL UP.***

AND WE GO TO WORK.

R-REX?

MORE OR LESS.

COME WITH ME.

THIS IS IT.

THE END OF THE LINE.

YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, SON.

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

WAIT, LOOK! THOSE PEOPLE!

WE HAVE TO HELP THEM!

EDDIE, DON'T!!!

MOVE!

AGH!

WHA-- WHAT JUST--

EDDIE, NO! GET THE HELL AWAY FROM THAT THING!

EDDIE!

NO, DAMMIT! I'M NOT RUNNING! I HAVE TO PROTECT THE--

NO!!!

AGH!

AHHHH!

SLOWLY...

LET IT HEAL. COME BACK TOGETHER...

WHAT...? MY BODY...FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN RIPPED IN HALF. DRAGON WENT RIGHT THROUGH ME. I DON'T--

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

THAT...

THAT WAS A WARNING.

REX...WHAT IS THIS? WHERE ARE WE?!

ALL... ALL OF THESE PEOPLE... REX, TALK TO ME. WHAT IS THIS--

COME ON, SON. DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME... WHETHER OR NOT YOU WANT TO ADMIT IT...

...YOU KNOW *EXACTLY* WHERE WE ARE.

THE HIVE.

OH MY GOD... ALL THESE PEOPLE... THEY...

HE TOOK THEM...

YES, HE DID.

AND SORRY TO SAY...

...IT WASN'T JUST THE CIVILIANS...

CAP, THE THING...

GOD, NO. NO... I SHOULD HAVE...

THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE... NOTHING *ANYONE* COULD HAVE DONE...

...OR CAN DO...

NO! I'VE BEEN TRAPPED IN HERE BEFORE AND I'VE BEATEN THIS!

THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING I CAN DO! I HAVE TO SAVE THEM! I HAVE TO GET TO MY SON!

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR **DEPTH,** BROCK.

LOOK AT YOURSELF. HAVEN'T EVEN GOT A **SHIRT ON YOUR BACK.**

THIS ISN'T LIKE THOSE TIMES. YOU'RE A CODEX NOW.

A MEMORY.

THE SYMBIOTES, THEY KEEP PIECES OF **ALL** THE HOSTS THEY'VE BONDED WITH IN THEIR HIVE. BUT THEY...

...THEY AREN'T **REAL...**

...THEY'RE **GHOSTS.**

WALKING **INFORMATION.** PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME? WE CAN SURVIVE HERE A LITTLE BETTER. MOVE THINGS AROUND A BIT. AFFECT LITTLE THINGS...

...LIKE HOW I WAS ABLE TO GET YOU TO PUSH THOSE SYMBIOTES OFF OF YOU BACK THERE...

BUT THE **REAL WORLD?** THE REAL, REAL WORLD?

IT'S **GONE,** MAN.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

HOW? HOW CAN **WE** DO THIS, BUT THESE POOR PEOPLE ARE JUST TRAPPED AND CAN'T--

BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN **BONDED TO SYMBIOTES LONGER** THAN THESE PEOPLE STUCK HERE...BUT EVEN THEN...WE'RE JUST PIECES OF **DATA** IN THE MACHINE.

RIGHT...YEAH, I REMEMBER. I WAS ABLE TO ABSORB **FLASH THOMPSON'S CODEX,** AND HE CAME BACK FOR A WHILE...

OKAY. WE...JUST NEED TO GET ME BACK TO MY BODY, AND THEN I CAN--

AH, MAN...YOU... YOU DON'T KNOW...

THERE... IS NO... **YOU.**

"YOU'RE DEAD, EDDIE."

WAIT...

NO...

DYLAN...

SON, NO... I'M...I'M HERE, I'M--

EDDIE...I KNOW THIS IS HARD. BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT...AND STANDING AROUND LOOKING AT IT AIN'T GONNA MAKE IT ANY--

DON'T.

TOUCH.

ME.

NOW, SON. CALM DOWN OR--

NO! I WILL NOT *ACCEPT* THIS!

I KEEP *TELLING YOU.* IT'S OVER! YOU CAN'T--

I SAY WHEN THIS IS OVER!

I HAVE BEEN PUSHED AROUND AND SWALLOWED WHOLE AND DROWNED IN THIS @#$% MY ENTIRE LIFE, AND I AM SICK OF IT!!!

THEY DON'T GET TO TAKE THIS ONE FROM ME. NOT LIKE THIS!

MY DEATH.

I WON'T ALLOW IT.

T-TAKE WHAT?

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

LOOK, KID... THERE'S NOT MUCH TO BE DONE. I MEAN--

NO! YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. YOU WERE ABLE TO CONTROL SOME OF THE SYMBIOTES IN HERE BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN BONDED TO ONE LONGER THAN ANYONE HERE.

YOUR CONNECTION IS ***STRONGER...***

YES. BUT EVEN THEN...I CAN'T AFFECT ANY REAL CHANGE IN ***PHYSICAL SPACE.***

I CAN.

YOU THINK YOU HAVE CONTROL IN HERE BECAUSE YOU WORE A SYMBIOTE FOR, WHAT? A COUPLE OF YEARS?

WELL, I'VE WORN ONE FOR LONGER THAN ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING WHO HAS EVER LIVED!

IF I CAN FIND ***MY OTHER*** IN HERE, I PROMISE YOU THE TWO OF US TOGETHER CAN BURN THIS THING TO THE GROUND!

NOT... NOT A BAD POINT.

ONLY ONE PROBLEM...

FINDING IT AIN'T GONNA BE THE ISSUE...

...GETTING TO IT...GETTING IT *FREED...*

"...THAT'S GONNA TAKE A LITTLE WORK."

DEAR GOD...

HOW...

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET UP THERE... ALONE...?

NOT ALONE, KID.

LIKE I TOLD YOU...THERE'S STILL SOME SYMBIOTE FRIENDLIES IN THE HIVE...SOME THAT WERE HERE BEFORE KNULL ARRIVED AND DON'T EXACTLY AGREE WITH HIS AGENDA...

YOU'LL HAVE ME AND MINE. TYRANNOSAURUS REX'LL HAVE YOUR BACK AS LONG AS WE'RE STANDING.

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY...

...I'M HAPPY TO SAY I FINALLY FOUND THE VENOM I WAS LOOKING FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE...

AGENT FLASH "VENOM" THOMPSON REPORTING FOR DUTY, SIR.

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BROCK.

TO BE CONTINUED...

COELLO

KING IN BLACK

NEXT:

VENOM #33

CHECKLIST

- [x] **VENOM #32**
  REST IN PEACE.
- [x] **RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1**
  THE VALKYRIES MUST SAVE THE SOUL OF THE SENTRY!
- [x] **SPIDER-WOMAN #8**
  JESSICA DREW BREAKS BAD AS DARKNESS FALLS ON MANHATTAN!
- [x] **SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #3**
  SPIDER-MAN TRAVELS THROUGH SPACE TO THE SEVERED HEAD OF A CELESTIAL, BETTER KNOWN AS KNOWHERE!
- [x] **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #10**
  THE GUARDIANS WEREN'T FAST ENOUGH TO SAVE EARTH FROM KNULL—BUT CAN THEY SAVE THEMSELVES?

- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1**
  A BATTLE OF THE BANDS LIKE NO OTHER: GWEN STACY VS. MARY JANE WATSON!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #3**
  TIDES RISE AS NAMOR'S SECRET PAST SPILLS OVER!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1**
  THE SYMBIOTES SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH? NOT IF SCREAM CAN HELP IT!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1**
  WILSON FISK, MAYOR OF NEW YORK, HAS TAKEN MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS...BY ASSEMBLING A TEAM OF VILLAINS TO SAVE NEW YORK!
- [ ] **S.W.O.R.D. #2**
  TO SAVE THE GALAXY, THEY MUST SAVE ONE OF THEIR OWN!
- [ ] **THE UNION #2**
  THE GLOBAL ASSAULT OF SYMBIOTES SPARES NO VICTIMS!

- [ ] **KING IN BLACK #3** (PICTURED)
  WHAT'S A GOD TO A KING?
- [ ] **DAREDEVIL #26**
  MATT MURDOCK AND ELEKTRA MUST EACH FACE THE DELUGE OF SYMBIOTES CONSUMING THE CITY!
- [ ] **BLACK CAT #2**
  FELICIA IS TASKED WITH SAVING DOCTOR STRANGE—WITH ANTI-VENOM?!

- [ ] **DEADPOOL #10**
  MONSTERS BEWARE—IT'S KING VS. KING FOR STATEN ISLAND!
- [ ] **KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT #1**
  DANE WHITMAN, THE BLACK KNIGHT, LEARNS THE HORRIBLE HISTORY OF HIS LINEAGE AND THE EBONY BLADE!
- [ ] **RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #2**
  THE VALKYRIES LEARN MUCH MORE IS AT STAKE THAN JUST EARTH WHEN THEY FIND A LARGE LOOMING SPIRIT ABOVE THE PLANET!
- [ ] **SAVAGE AVENGERS #17**
  CONAN AND DEADPOOL BREAK OUT OF RYKER'S AND ENTER THE FRAY OF SYMBIOTE DRAGONS!